

**NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL:  
ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN LIBERAL STUDIES  
NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**

***ACTION***  
**Agenda Item F-1-a  
September 18, 2000**

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**Recommendation:**

That the Associate Degree in Liberal Studies (ADLS) proposed by Northern Kentucky University be approved and registered in CIP 24.0101 (Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies).

**Rationale:**

- The proposed program would provide a general purpose credential for entry-level jobs in northern Kentucky. It also would offer students without a specific career focus and those who do not plan to complete an advanced degree a realistic avenue to degree completion.
- The program includes opportunity for earning credit through distance learning and the acceptance of transfer credit from other institutions, requiring that only the last 20 credit hours be taken through Northern. Courses offered by various institutions via the Kentucky Virtual University would be accepted, including the last 20 credit hours, as long as the student is registered in the liberal studies program at NKU. KCTCS has been contacted to ensure maximum cooperation between the proposed program and community and technical college offerings.
- The curriculum is designed to improve student communication, critical thinking, and decision-making, and to prepare students to continue their education in disciplines.
- Employers and residents support the program.
- Northern will phase out the program when the planned community college opens in northern Kentucky.

**Background:**

Using the Kentucky Postsecondary Program Proposal System, Northern Kentucky University posted the proposed program on the Council's website. It was reviewed without objection by public universities, private colleges and universities in Kentucky, and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Associate programs proposed by four-year institutions are subject to full review and approval by the Council.

An executive summary of the program submitted by NKU is attached.

Staff Preparation by Barbara Cook

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **PROPOSED ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN LIBERAL STUDIES**

The proposed Associate Degree in Liberal Studies at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) is a minimum of sixty-four (64) semester-hour program which seeks to promote opportunity for learners to explore the liberal studies tradition, to enable learners to better understand and relate to the world around them from a liberal studies perspective, and to encourage learners to select additional courses in an area they may wish to pursue for further self-improvement and professional growth. The Associate Degree in Liberal Studies offers a selection of courses from the Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Behavioral and Social Sciences, and Mathematics and Computer Science. The last 20 hours of the program must be taken at NKU and students are required to meet general studies requirements.

Students are required to take a minimum of fifteen (15) semester hours from the following areas of study and a minimum of three (3) semester hours from two different disciplines within the chosen area of study: (1) Natural Science (Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Integrated Science, Chemistry, Physics, and Geology); (2) Fine Arts (Art, Music, and Theatre); (3) Humanities (Afro-American Studies, Foreign Language, History, English, Philosophy, Religious studies, and Women's Studies); Behavioral and Social Sciences (Anthropology, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, Speech, and Political Science); and Mathematics and Computer Science (Mathematics and Computer Science). No course taken to satisfy general studies can be used to satisfy this requirement.

Students are required to have a GPA of at least 2.00 on all work attempted at NKU and at least 2.00 on all college work attempted. The degree cannot be counted as a minor or area of concentration.

Opportunities for distance learning abound in the Associate Degree of Liberal Studies. A large percentage of the credit hours required for the degree are from the general studies program, many of which are offered through distance learning (even for the required last twenty (20) hours of the program). The program is also extremely flexible for students. Credit can be gained through telecourses, web-based courses, and at the off-campus centers of NKU.

Defined transfer equivalencies and the Kentucky Transfer Module assure that work completed at other Kentucky institutions will count toward the degree in Liberal Studies.

In general, NKU expects graduates will have acquired basic skills, learning, and other competencies: (1) to think clearly and logically, to find and critically examine information, to communicate orally and in writing, and to perform basic quantitative functions; (2) to acquire knowledge about their own bodies and minds, about how human society has developed and how it functions, about the physical world in which they live, about other forms of life, and about the cultural endeavors and legacies of civilization;

and (3) to understand and appreciate the principles, methodologies, value systems, and thought processes employed in human inquiries.

There is a growing demand for an Associate Degree in Liberal Studies program as evidenced by letters received from several greater Cincinnati businesses. Area employers have indicated that the proposed Associate Degree in Liberal Studies has the potential to not only enhance employee literacy, but job skills as well. Current professional thinking among employers is that general education and skill development are important aspects of business, social service, technical and other fields. Specifically, employers value a student's skills in communications, critical thinking, and decision-making. This degree would provide the type of general-purpose credential necessary for entry into many of the available jobs in the northern Kentucky/greater Cincinnati area.

Northern Kentucky University believes the degree has a high potential for retention of the less focused student as well as for the student who need the validation of a shortened academic experience.

Finally, the program upholds the primary mission of instruction within the context of a solid liberal arts degree and serves the educational needs of a large and diverse population. If approved, the Program would enroll its first students in the 2000-01 academic year.